



Hornby Island Local Trustees

K'OMOKS FIRST NATION, TREATY PROCESS AND HORNBY ISLAND

Hornby Island is within the traditional territory of the K'omoks First Nation, which is currently engaged in treaty negotiations with Canada and British Columbia. An initial treaty offer presented to K'omoks in January, 2009 included land on Hornby Island.

The treaty negotiating teams for Canada and BC, prior to presenting this offer, consulted with local governments and communities in the treaty area. Two meetings were held with members of the Hornby Island Local Trust Committee and the Committee prepared a submission to the negotiators stressing the significance of the vacant Crown land on Mount Geoffrey with respect to groundwater recharge, ecosystem protection, recreation and other values.

The negotiators visited Hornby Island in October 2008 to participate in a tour of the Island and to attend a public meeting organized by the local trustees, the regional director and the executive committee of the Hornby Island Residents' and Ratepayers' Association. Presentations were made by committees and groups with expertise on the Island's Crown land and input was also provided by community members.

The K'omoks First Nation has now responded to the offer made in January 2009, but is not accepting what is currently on the table. Concerns have been presented, specifically with respect to the scarcity of available land. K'omoks, BC and Canada continue to negotiate and the parties meet regularly. These negotiations will lead to an “agreement in principle”.

The total land offer of 1,300 ha. in the January 2009 proposal included a 10 ha. parcel of Crown land on Hornby Island. The land is north of Central Road between Carmichael Road and a point roughly opposite the recycling depot. This would be settlement land which K'omoks First Nation would own outright. Currently the land is held by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and is zoned for “public use”.

Also as part of the settlement offer, BC proposed that approximately 276.4 ha of vacant Crown land on the slopes of Mount Geoffrey adjacent to the Regional Nature Park become a provincial park, thereby protecting this area in perpetuity. In respect for the K'omoks First Nation's historical presence on Hornby Island, K'omoks would be asked to name the park. This land is currently zoned as Groundwater Recharge Area / Sustainable Ecosystem Management Area. It has been the subject of great community interest over the years, and the focus of two detailed studies by community groups in 2000.

In a separate process from the treaty negotiations, K'omoks has invited representatives of local governments and agencies (including members of the Hornby Island Local Trust Committee) to attend a series of three “Shared Understanding” sessions. These sessions are providing information on cultural, historic, social and legal perspectives. The gatherings are also opportunities for relationship-building as a foundation for consultative decision-making and for smooth implementation of treaty provisions when the treaty is eventually established.

Fred Hunt and Tony Law - May 5, 2009